

It's nice to talk about light overcoming darkness. Most of the fairy tales and the Disney stories focus on this theme. The bad guys dwell in some dark castle or cave. They are portrayed as hideous creatures who show up with evil laughter and gloomy music. The good shine with light, joyful music and most of them are beautiful. But those are fairy tales or movies.

We all have to live in the real world. When we talk about light overcoming darkness it can be pretty abstract. What do we mean by darkness? What do we mean by light? How is it possible to be part of light overcoming darkness?

There was a guy named John who was smart and thoughtful. He looked back on his life and all he experienced.

He wrote the words you heard a few moments ago in the lighting of the Christ candle – words which we have today. “In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”

People have debated for centuries what John meant by all this. He mentions light, darkness and the Word. At first this doesn't seem to address our problem of talking about light and darkness more concretely. But spend some time in his writing and you begin to see what John meant.

So he writes “In the beginning was the Word.” What word? Well a little farther on he writes “the Word became flesh.” So that sounds like the Word is a person or became a person. He also writes “The Word dwelt or lived among us and we have seen his glory.” The Word was a person John knew, lived with and had some sort of glory.

And read a little further on and you discover that by the Word, John actually referred to the one who would be born as Jesus, the baby whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. But John doesn't call him Jesus in the beginning. Technically the name Jesus refers that Word when He became human. So the Word was Jesus before He was born as a baby.

John writes “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” So somehow Jesus was with God in the beginning and He was God. “All things were made through him and without him not anything was made.” So John claims Jesus was there at Creation and participated in the creative work that began the universe.

But, you may say, I thought we were talking about light and darkness. Yes, and we get to that now where again we read from John – “In him, the Word, Jesus, was life and the life was the light of men.” So here we get John’s definition of light. It’s not the light of the sun or a lamp or a star. The light is the life of Jesus. God the Son’s life is the light. Jesus’ life power is the light.

So what is darkness? The number one definition for darkness refers to light. Darkness is the absence of light. So if Jesus’ life power is the light. Then darkness would be the absence of Jesus’ life power. And John wrote “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” That kind of sounds like a battle or fight doesn’t it? Light shines in darkness. Darkness tries to put out the light. But darkness cannot overcome this light – the life power of Jesus. The light overcomes. The light wins.

Now for John, darkness did not just mean the physical darkness of the absence of light. He meant the forces of darkness – the devil; his demons; death; sin – all of these destroy people. These forces tried to overcome the light – Jesus – when He was on earth. We see this all through the Christmas story as the light, baby Jesus, is protected from those who want to destroy him. The darkness does not overcome Jesus the light.

So what does all this have to do with you and me? Well John, along with many other writers in the Bible agree on a universal reality about all of us. We were born into darkness. We were born apart from the light of Jesus’ life power. Many people today live in darkness under the influence and reign of that which aims to destroy them – their sin, death, the devil and his forces. But listen to what John also wrote. “The true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God.” Somehow, if we receive the true light, we become God’s children. We have the light of men inside of us. The darkness will not overcome us.

Many of you already have the light of Christ in you. He calls you to continue to shine His light through your life. You have within you the light that all need. You have in you the true light which gives life to everyone. So shine it in the way you live, talk, act, respond, text and drive. Let Jesus’ life light come out of you so that others can see it.

Some of you have never heard this before. Some of you may have heard but you don’t like it. Jesus Himself may have an explanation about why this is true for you. Jesus was about 30 years old, when a religious scholar came to visit Him –

Jesus talked with him about light and darkness. Jesus said “the light has come into the world and people loved the darkness because their works were evil.” Jesus provides a root reason why people want nothing to do with Him. He’s the light they need but they love the darkness they live in. Friend, if that’s you, darkness might feel good right now but it’s out to destroy you. Please don’t camp there or settle there. I know it may cost you a lot to come to the light Jesus. But it will cost you everything not to come to Him. Darkness will overcome you.

But no one still breathing is too far gone. Tonight you can come to the light and begin the journey of living by the life power of Jesus. If you are interested in that or wonder more about it, talk to a Christian you know who may have invited you. Or talk to one of us and we’d like to hear about your journey and the possibility of living by Jesus’ light.

Christian, keep shining your light and walking by it. Jesus says to you “Come to me all you who are weary and heavy burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”